

Message Text

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3887

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1813

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IZ

SUBJECT: TRIP TO KURDISTAN

1. USINT OFFICERS KEISWETTER AND PERCIVAL TRAVELED FROM SALAHEDINE TO GALALA DURING RECENT VACATION IN NORTHERN IRAQ. AREA ALONG THE ROAD WAS UNDER MILITARY OCCUPATION WITH SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SOLDIERS THAN KURDS. MILITARY CAMPS ESTABLISHED APPROXIMATELY EVERY KILOMETER AND SMALL SQUADS OF SOLDIERS POSTED ON ALMOST EVERY HILLOCK AND STRATEGIC POSITION IN SIGHT. DESTROYED BRIDGES REPLACED WITH ARMY FIELD SERVICE BRIDGES AND BARRACKS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN MANY CAMPS. IN SUM, OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT ARMY HAS OCCUPIED AREA AND PLANS TO REMAIN THERE IN FORCE FOR FORSEEABLE FUTURE.

2. ARMY APPEARED TO BE RELAXED, PARTICULARLY IN AREA FROM SALAHEDINE TO RAWANDUZ. SOLDIERS IN RAWANDUZ AND SMALL VILLAGES WERE USUALLY UNARMED. PATROLS HEADED FOR HIGHER MOUNTAINS GENERALLY CONSISTED OF TWO MEN AND A MULE. TRUCK CONVOYS UNUSUAL AND PATROLS ALONG ROAD CONSISTED OF SINGLE TRUCKS WITH MACHINE GUNS MOUNTED ON THE CABS AND APPROXIMATELY A DOZEN SOLDIERS.

3. ALTHOUGH NO TANKS OR ARTILLERY COULD BE POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED FROM THE ROAD, RAWANDUZ MARKETPLACE WAS FILLED WITH SOLDIERS FROM ARTILLERY FORMATIONS AND IN DISTANCE TOWARDS DIYANA TARPAULIN-COVERED AND PARTIALLY DUG IN EQUIPMENT COULD BE SEEN.

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4. WE WERE TOLD THAT ARMY ROTATES UNITS IN KURDISTAN EVERY THREE MONTHS AND ENFORCES STRINGENT RULES AGAINST MIXING WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION. SEVERAL KURDISH HOMES APPEAR TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE MILITARY AND, ACCORDING TO CHALDEAN PRIEST IN ANKAWA, FORMER ASSYRIAN VILLAGE OF DIYANA REMAINS DESERTED. KURDS ARE PROHIBITED FROM OWNING ANY WEAPONS AND VILLAGE NOTABLES ARE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ATTACKS ON MILITARY LAUNCHED FROM AREAS UNDER THEIR NOMINAL CONTROL.

5. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT KURDISH INSURGENCY ALONG ROAD LIMITED TO OCCASIONAL LOW LEVEL HARASSMENT OF ARMY IN AREA FROM RAWANDUZ TO IRANIAN BORDER.
WILEY

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